

# The Poetical Gazette

The Official Journal of the Poetry Society and a Review of Poetical Affairs.

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TO "THE ACADEMY."

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"The Poetry Society has been founded to nourish the love of Poetry in the heart of man. In a material age there is need to keep alive the imaginative side of human life . . . Local gatherings are held and are in contemplation to bring together the lovers of Poetry by recitals, by discussions, and in other ways to stimulate the love of the Poets, and to spread far and wide their message to man." — Lord Coleridge President. (For other official details, see page 8.)

## SOCIETY NEWS AND NOTES

The notice in another column with respect to the cancellation of all membership cards issued previous to November last is intended to secure a systematic registration of members, whether they have joined at headquarters or been recruited through centres. It is intended also to ensure all members having one uniform certificate of membership, which alone will be recognised as the Society's "season ticket." It is hoped that members will facilitate this consolidation by acting without delay on the order of the Council. This issue of amended certificates has been synchronised with the falling due of the annual subscription to avoid unnecessary trouble or reminders being given to members, and we trust appreciation of this simplification of procedure will be shown by the prompt payment of the annual fee.

Our members are so well acquainted with the objects of the Society and the serious practical efforts made to attain those aims and to develop the work we all recognise as being so necessary and desirable, that we need not emphasise the low subscription rate or the urgency of active as well as financial support. At ordinary charges the 5s. subscription would not cover the expenses of Centre meetings, and it is estimated that with the present membership each member would involve the Society in a loss of 5s. (instead of contributing towards a fund for propaganda work), if the general expenses and the services rendered were fully met. Each new member reduces the cost per head of our organisation, and we trust each member will recognise his or her responsibility towards the Society for the work we are mutually associated in by introducing at least one new member each month. We want to reach an ever-widening circle of people, and while we are binding together in a vast freemasonry the English-speaking race, and offering Australia, South Africa, and America a share in the one common bond afforded by Poetry alone, independent of religion, politics, or climate, we want to extend more vigorously our work at home. The necessity for this extension (as well as the paucity of funds in comparison with the enormous missionary work before us) justifies the instruction to Centre secretaries that a levy of 1s. per head must be made as a contribution to the expense of issuing a monthly journal. The value and usefulness of the regular monthly publication of the POETICAL GAZETTE cannot be over-estimated. It keeps headquarters in touch with all sections of the Society, and advises members of what is occurring throughout the Society—of our progress, efforts and aspirations—and helps Centres to benefit from the record of what is done at Centre meetings. It should be the pleasure as well as the duty of members to keep themselves fully acquainted with the contents of the journal and to regard it as their own

official gazette. Members unable to attend any Centre meetings and those who have recognised their duty to the Society, of which we are all component, contributory parts, are absolved from this levy, which the Council has been obliged to declare a compulsory charge through the Centres.

The use of the word "branches" is calculated to foster the misleading idea that members joining through a Centre are "branch" and not general members of the Society. Membership is universal in its application. We are all members of one body, joined together to promote a common object—to promote a more general appreciation of poetry and win for it more regard, and to indulge in the enjoyment we personally derive from the first of the arts. The Centre system is merely intended to enable groups of members to meet together to read and discuss poetry in the only feasible way,—not in large uncongenial meetings, devoid of the elusive atmosphere so requisite to the adequate enjoyment of Poetry, but in friendly, semi-private circles. While we welcome the recognition and support of all poetry-lovers, irrespective of their ability to attend local meetings, we must depend on the Centre system of grouping to make membership individually effective.

We hope to experience considerable expansion in the coming year. Various social gatherings of an interesting nature, a season at Steinway Hall to demonstrate the art of speaking verse, and the pleasure to be derived from it; a provincial recital tour intended, like a regimental route march, to obtain recruits and form Centres; holiday arrangements with a poetic interest, in which it is possible that American members may take part; the annual dinner, to which the *leit-motif* of last year's successful gathering will again be applied; a visit to Stratford-on-Avon, and the production of a poetical play are among the matters under consideration.

We need more workers to help in keeping alive the imaginative side of human life, the mainspring of all activity. The Society represents one of the greatest and most necessary missionary efforts of our day—helping ourselves and others to find through poetry the significance of life, its perpetual romance and mystery and charm, and to realise more fully the wonderful beauty and joy of living—

Oh, world as God has made it, all is beauty,  
And knowing this is love, and love is duty!

Interpreter, consoler, and inspirer, Poetry, preserving the visitations of the divinity to man, is of far greater influence and importance than the world at large recognises. And because of this, the Society, engaged in idealistic yet practical work, needs the personal service of devoted helpers everywhere.

Appreciating the importance of elocution and the desirability of applying it to the art of speaking verse, the Society is anxious to get into closer touch with schools and colleges, and to encourage the intelligent teaching of reading and speaking, and the study of poetry. We should be glad to get into communication with schools

desirous of adequately dealing with the cognate subjects, and to recommend or supply competent teachers as well as to organise institutional Centres. Private and secondary schools would find many advantages in co-operation with the Society, not the least being the infusion of interest and vitality into the study of elocution.

Apropos of this, we note with interest the remarks of the new vicar of St. Oswald's, Fulham, who is attached to the Bishop of Winchester's Theological College at Farnham, teaching the principles of voice production as applied to work in church. "Before a man goes up into the pulpit," said Mr. Ward, in an interview, "he ought to know what he has got to say and how to say it, and when he has said it he should stop. The dramatic possibilities of the Bible are tremendous. Before I read a lesson I get a picture of it in my mind, and then if I cannot put that picture before the people I am reading to I have failed. I start my instruction by teaching men how to breathe properly. I divide my course into departments. Intoning is one, though I would do away with it in a great many churches as unnecessary. Discriminating and intelligent reading of the Lessons is another. Reading prayers is a third, and general elocution for all purposes, especially preaching, is one of the most important sides of the work. Lifelessness is driving men out of churches." Mr. Ward advocates a reasonable but real test in reading and speaking for all candidates for ordination.

In a greeting from the South Australian members of the Poetry Society to their English comrades, Miss Adelaide Primrose says:—

A greeting from our Southern land  
We send across the sea,  
To England's home of learning wide,  
All hail to Poesy.  
Hail we great bards who in their lives  
Were buffeted by Fate,  
And gained a meed of fame and praise  
Alas! oft all too late.  
Hail we sweet singers who would scale  
The peaks of great desire,  
And touch the burden of their lays  
With bright Celestial fire.  
Hail! the descendants of the great;  
Hail! those who seek to know  
The beauty of poetic lines,  
Which like bright jewels glow.  
We are the children of a race  
Who sailed across the main;  
Our hearts beat in the same glad way  
To poetry's refrain.  
And so across the wind-kissed waves  
We stretch our hands to-day,  
And feel the thrill of friendship's clasp  
Though we are far away,  
You, in your distant Northern home,  
We, in our land of sun,  
Will find the nectar in the flowers—  
Our work of love begun.  
We'll walk through dark, sequestered groves,  
Through sunny aisles, and bowers  
Filled with an incense strange and sweet  
From myriad scented flowers.  
We'll cull each bloom with reverent hand  
And climb the mountain's height,  
Where Poetry in spirit stands  
A vision pure and bright.  
We'll seek the valleys calm and still,  
We'll sail the seas and go  
To caverns rare and beautiful  
Where thoughts are buried low.  
So take our greeting, though it be  
Ill-strung and vagrant rhyme,  
The heart is there, the clasp is there,  
Of Poetry sublime!

## "THE READING OF POETRY"

A Times Leader.

[Following on the Forbes-Robertson audition reported in the *Times* and other leading papers, our premier newspaper devoted a leading article to this phase of the Society's work. We have pleasure in reprinting this significant and important recognition.]

"At a meeting of the Poetry Society the other day, Mr. Forbes-Robertson, after hearing some of the members read and recite poetry, advised them to refrain from gesticulation, which, he said, was out of place in readings or recitations of poetry. It is pleasant to find an actor insisting upon this fact, for the influence of the stage upon the delivery of poetry has often been disastrous. Actors are apt to be too dramatic even when they deliver blank verse on the stage. Sometimes, indeed, they tear the rhythm to tatters, as if they thought the author wrote verse only by mistake, and they were doing him a kindness by turning it into prose. This is bad enough; but the dramatic delivery of poetry that is not dramatic is far more distressing. Many reciters seem to be ignorant of the fact that rhythm, in all poetry that is worth reciting, is a means of expression; indeed, that rhythm and sense are so closely connected that the one cannot be understood without the other. Spoil the rhythm and you spoil the sense; misunderstand the sense and you will mar the rhythm. In fact, good verse is said wrongly if it is not said rhythmically; and any dramatic airs and graces which break the rhythm, or even distract the hearer's attention from it, are not merely superfluous but mischievous. A reciter of poetry ought no more to gesticulate than a violinist ought to wave his bow about in the middle of his performance. Music, in the one case, and words, in the other, are the only proper means of expression; and in good poetry there is even less occasion for displays of virtuosity than in good music. A reciter's first aim should be to understand thoroughly the poem which he proposes to recite; not merely the sense of it, but also the quality of its emotion; for he cannot understand the one without understanding the other. And he cannot understand either unless he is aware of the expressive function of metre and rhythm.

"We say metre and rhythm, because rhythm is necessary to preserve metre from mere sing-song. It is the peculiar character of each line, expressive of its peculiar sense and emotion, which is imposed upon the general pattern of the metre. A familiar instance is to be found in the line—

"Of man's first disobedience and the fruit—"

Here a reader who does not give careful attention to the sense will adhere to the strict metrical pattern, lay no stress on the word *first*, and spoil both the rhythm and the meaning of the verse. In all good poetry there are such delicate varieties of rhythm; and the reader or reciter, if he searches for these and uses them as means of expression, will find that there is no room in his art for dramatic effects. He must know how to manage his voice, of course, so that his audience may not be troubled by its defects. But when he can do that he has nothing to think about but the phrasing of his poetry, which should be musical rather than dramatic, and expressive as the phrasing of music is expressive. Mr. Forbes-Robertson gave one piece of advice which might be dangerous to readers who do not understand the importance of phrasing. He laid great stress, we are told, upon the beauty in the mere sound of many words, apart from their position in a line or phrase. Therefore, he said, it behoved reciters to be very careful to give out the entire preciousness of the sound of such words. Now it is perfectly true that some words are more beautiful in sound than others, although it is very difficult to dissociate sound from meaning. But beauty of rhythm is in all good poetry far more important than the beauty of particular words; and, the better the poetry, the more difficult it is to dissociate their beauty from their meaning or from their position in a line

or phrase. There are many poems, popular with reciters, in which great stress is laid upon a single word often repeated. Poe's 'Raven' is an example, with its *Nevermore*. But these are seldom good poems, and the methods of delivery which they suggest should not be applied to good poems. It would be disastrous, for instance, to lay great stress upon the word *forlorn* at the end of the famous verse in Keats's 'Ode to the Nightingale,' for such a stress would destroy the rhythm of the whole passage, which depends upon a very even intonation.

The treatment of rhyme is one of the most difficult problems in the delivery of poetry. Reciters often say rhymed verse as if they were trying to conceal the fact that it is rhymed. But poets would scarcely use rhymes if they did not mean them to be heard; and it is said that many good poets, in reading their own poetry, are apt to lay as great stress on the rhymes as on the rhythm. Certainly a reciter should not be afraid of rhymes. Where a rhyming word is important in sound or sense he should sound it boldly; and even when the sense runs over without a break into the next line he should not be too anxious to insist upon its continuity. For in poetry lines are facts that are not meant to be ignored. Indeed, rhymes are there to emphasise them. But the good poet usually shows, by the use of strong or weak rhymes, how far he means them to be stressed. In the 'Ancient Mariner,' for instance, which is a model in all the formal excellences of poetry, it is quite clear that the rhymes are meant to be stressed in the verse:—

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,  
The furrow followed free;  
We were the first that ever burst  
Into that silent sea."

For here the rhyme words are both important in sense and strong in sound. On the other hand, the rhymes should be softly sounded in the verse:—

"Sometimes a-dropping from the sky,  
I heard the skylark sing;  
Sometimes all little birds that are,  
How they seem'd to fill the earth and air  
With their sweet jargoning!"

For, apart from the weakness and imperfection of the rhyme sounds, the rhythm would be spoilt by any emphasis on the last words of the lines. In fact, rhyme is a part of metre, and, with metre, is always subject to rhythm. Understand the rhythm of a poem and you will know how to treat its rhymes. The more expressive a poem is, the more it is swayed by rhythm; and the good reciter will allow his voice to be swayed by rhythm as if he were thinking aloud and rhythm were the natural expression of his own thought."

## LONDON IN SONG

The City as an Inspiration to Poets.

Under this heading the *Evening News* published a very interesting and suggestive article, which is another indication of the more general attention that poetry is receiving. The writer makes a suggestion that might be acted on by Centres—the collection of poems illustrative of London life. An evening devoted to the poetry of London would give ample scope for research, and the expression of individual taste.

We take the liberty of quoting the excellent advice of the *Evening News* writer. Beginning with a disparagement of anthologies, he says: "They are not needed in a labour of love, and to the literary man riding his hobby they are an abomination. He likes to dig himself among the treasures of literature, and not to have the gems found for him. It is pleasanter to wander oneself through the fields of poesy and pick one's own flowers instead of having them offered in a dry, stiff bouquet, the choice of another mind. And that is why, when I want to refresh my interest in London and to find what the poets have said about the

wonderful city and how it has appeared to their eyes, I go hunting on my own account, and I recommend this delightful pastime to all lovers of London and of poetry.

"Let them compile their own anthology. Their appreciation of London will be strengthened thereby, their understanding of it deepened. They will derive great satisfaction from the cultivation of the habit, for the study of London and of poetry are the two biggest subjects they can devote their leisure to. London, the city of adventure and contrasts, has many moods and expressions, and not all of them have been interpreted or described in poetry. Yet sufficient has been written to help the London lover to appreciate and understand his city and her divergent characters and moods."

After quoting a number of apposite poems, the writer concludes: "Those who are under the spell of London's lure, who, with Captain Morris, sigh for 'the sweet shady side of Pall Mall,' and are content in town to live and die, and with Leigh rejoice in the sounds of London,

(Of all the chimes on all the earth,  
Give me Saint-Martin's-in-the-Fields),

will find their pleasure and delight enhanced by looking up what the poets new and old have written about the grandest, greatest, most comprehensive city in the world."

## LYRIC COMPETITION

At the request of a number of members, the Council authorises the revival of the lyric competition. Although we cannot insist too strongly that the Society is intended to encourage the reading, not the writing, of poetry, we realise that a genuine appreciation of poetry is accompanied often by a gift of metrical expression, and that members who are verse-writers have some claim to consideration. The Society, therefore, will offer monthly a new poetical publication for the best lyric not exceeding twenty-four lines. Poems received too late to be adjudicated upon one month will be carried forward to the following month's competition.

The lyrics submitted will be dealt with by an authoritative critic, who will select the best for publication in the *GAZETTE*, the final adjudication being left to the votes of members. We would suggest that the published selection should be considered and voted upon at Centre meetings.

Competitors must be members of the Society, and their MSS. must be signed with their index number.

No correspondence can be entered into with regard to the competition, and MSS. cannot be returned, but in order to extend the value of the competition any competitor may obtain a critical opinion of his work, whether it is published or not in the *GAZETTE*, provided a fee of 1s. per poem is enclosed. The poetical judgments will be published in the *GAZETTE* under a nom-de-plume or index number. Only a limited number of lyrics can be thus dealt with, it being recognised that such a service is outside the scope of the Society, which is not a critical or revising body, and that this is a special arrangement for the help and satisfaction of members who wish to cultivate the gift of poetical expression and desire an authoritative opinion upon their work.

The Rev. R. L. Gales, a Newdigate prizeman, whose contributions to the *National Review*, *The Nation*, *Westminster Gazette*, and *The Vineyard*, are well known, has kindly consented to act as adjudicator.

Among the lyrics published in our January number the one entitled "Love makes time pass —" was adjudged the best. Will the writer please claim it?

Members are reminded that as a special privilege, they may obtain "The Academy" weekly for one year for 10s. (instead of the ordinary annual postal subscription of 15s.), or for one quarter 2s. 6d. This reduced rate applies to members only, and all subscriptions must be sent through headquarters.

## POETRY AND HAPPINESS

Challenging a statement in a speech by Mr. F. E. Smith, in which that eloquent opponent of women's suffrage declared that "the sum total of human happiness, knowledge, and achievement would have been almost unaffected if Sappho had never sung, if Joan of Arc had never fought, if Siddons had never played," "An Englishman," writing in the *Daily Mail*, develops a fine argument on behalf of the essential contribution of poetry to human happiness. "If happiness be anything better than the certainty of to-morrow's dinner," he writes, "then are poets and players the real makers of joy. To the poets, above all, mankind owes the purest delight that God has given it. There is an intense pleasure breathed into the mind and spirit by beautiful words, which, if it be not comparable with, still transcends the ephemeral triumphs of politicians. What Sappho meant for her own countrymen, who might read her as they list, we can surmise only by their generous praise. For Plato she was the tenth Muse. The ancient critics did not hesitate to place her in the same rank with Homer; she was the poetess, as he was the poet, of Greece. One critic marvels at the euphony and grace of her language. Another finds in her works his best example of sublimity. And we of to-day, who have but fragments to guide our judgment, find no dark mystery in the enthusiasm of the ancients. She writes no line that does not burn with life and movement. Her words, as the Halicarnassian said, 'nestle close to one another and are woven together.' Is it wonderful, then, that she should be a poet of poets, that Catallus himself delighted to turn her masterpiece into Latin, that our own Ben Jonson, who took his jewels of speech where he found them, borrowed from Sappho one beautiful line: 'The dear good angel of the spring, the nightingale'?"

"Thus it is that for more than two thousand years Sappho has increased the sum of human happiness. The happiness that came to the world when the noble, austere Siddons played was perhaps more intense at the moment of applause, and certainly more quickly transient. The voice of the poet echoes down the corridors of time. The voice of the actor is stilled for ever in death. The poet's is the greater, the better part, though he is not witness of the rapture which his works inspire. . . .

"If it be true that the greatest poet, the greatest actor, among women failed to increase the sum of human happiness, then poetry and the drama have failed throughout the ages. But they have not failed. It is for the proper enjoyment of the arts that all human efforts are made; it is by the solace of the arts that we are fitted to make those efforts.

"The glory of Athens resides rather in the noble monuments wrought by Phidias, in the marmoreal tragedies of Sophocles, than in the eloquence and statesmanship of Pericles. The history of the Italian States is but the history of painting, poetry, and philosophy. If we are not ignorant of Florentine politics it is because Machiavelli's 'Prince' introduced general ideas into the arid region of statecraft. And as we descend through the years it is the same tale that is told. The age of Elizabeth is less the age of Burleigh than of Shakespeare. The author of 'Hamlet' created out of the dry bones of reality an imperishable kingdom of happiness and romance. . . .

"In brief, all passes save the imaginings of Art. The politics which to-day seem the last thought of wisdom and beneficence go out forgotten into the night. The Constitutions designed to bring perpetual prosperity upon suffering States survive only as curiosities in a text-book. The eloquence which hushed the Senate is lost like the rustling of leaves in the tree-top. A word, a colour, a melody, as they bring a purer delight, so they live longer than the tangled policies of tyranny or revolution. And I verily believe that the discovery of Sappho's nine books of poems would more surely increase the sum of human happiness than the wisest Act of Parliament that ever could be added to the Statute-book."

## UNPOETICAL

To the Director of the Poetry Society.

DEAR SIR,—The members of the Poetry Society very properly are inclined to take pleasure in reading the pages of the *POETICAL GAZETTE*, hoping to profit by the hints they find there, and being ready to admire the specimens of verse submitted to them. The "poetry and music" pages in to-day's number open with some excellent advice to song-writers. They are not to be tedious, and not to be wishy-washy; their songs, too, must have a climax, and, if possible, must show some touch of originality.

Then follow four selected lyrical bits, the last of which is called "an exquisite poem." Well, the first three stanzas are charming, full of lovely pictures in suitable words, e.g.: "Long purple shadows over hushing hills," "The low-breathed litany of dying bells," and "Dew on the bending grapes." "Wavings of sleep" I don't understand. But the next line gives one a positive shock. We all know and feel the poetry in the words *moon* or *moonbeam*, but "the lunar beam" is an expression only fit for an astronomical lecture. Possibly Milton might be able to make some use of it, but in lyric poetry it is absolutely inadmissible.

And then, Sir, the last stanza being the weakest of the lot, what becomes of the climax?—Yours truly,

W. F. R.

Shamley Green, Guildford,  
December 3.

We gave Mr. Graves an opportunity of replying to this interesting letter. He sends the following remarks: "While fully expecting to be criticised upon my selections printed in your last issue, I can only express surprise upon reading the remarks of 'W. F. R.' on 'Leave me not ever.' There is an elegance and dignity in the expression 'the lunar beam' which is in keeping with the rest of the poem. I quite admit that it also belongs to the vocabulary of the lecturer on astronomy, but I see no reason for confining its use to scientists. For that matter, 'W. F. R.' might equally object to 'Boreas' in lyric poetry in place of its English equivalent. As for the last stanza, I should have thought the climax was obvious. To me it suggests unmistakably nocturnal anger followed by a reconciliation with the dawn. Perhaps in the next issue Mr. Alfred Williams will give his own version of the meaning of what seems to me to be a peculiarly straightforward idea."

## POETIC PICTURES.

To the Director of the Poetry Society.

I am anxious to act on your suggestion that famous pictures should be utilised in schools and elsewhere to stimulate interest in the study and speaking of poetry. I am sure such pictures as Waterhouse's "Lady of Shalott" would help children and others to visualise the scene and realise the beauty of the poem, and I should be glad if fellow-members better acquainted with British art than I am would provide a list of notable pictures based on or illustrating famous poems. I hope to see such a list published in the *POETICAL GAZETTE*, which should be more used for intercommunication and advice.—Yours, W. Z. I.

*The Fool's Signet, and other Dramatic Pieces.* A Collection of Prose and Verse suitable for Recitation. By CECIL GARTH. (John Long, Ltd. 2s. 6d.)

A WIDE range of human experience and emotion is covered by this book, and grim tragedy is relieved by tender pathos, while the lighter mood of "The London Lay," "The Tragedy of Thin Partitions," and "Excelsior" will recommend it to many. We can imagine "The Soul of a Slave," "The Silent Toast," and "Thalia," to mention but three pieces fraught with deep feeling, bringing tears to the eyes when read with intelligent appreciation of their literary merits and delicate pathos, and the poetical prose of "The Call of the Desert" and "The Brothers" would delight a cultured audience.

## SIR ALFRED EAST AND THE MISSION OF POETRY

In proposing the toast of the Society at our anniversary dinner, Sir Alfred East, P.R.B.A., who has since become one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society, said:

I feel that you have recognised the claim of the sister art of painting by placing this toast in my hands, and I look upon it as a compliment to the art which I have the honour to follow. The art of painting is closely allied to that of poetry, and their intention is the same—to express, so far as possible, the ideal. Were it not to express the ideal then neither painting nor poetry would retain the eminent position they hold in our estimation. For if the materialism of our age should show us nothing more than a series of absolute facts, then the diagrammatist or the writer of prose might serve all our wants. But we are thankful to know that the real mission of poetry is to open out to all and everyone new fields of thought, so strange and so ethereal that the pen of the poet and the brush of the painter have only limned the mere suggestion of their beauty—a country into which the cares of the world cannot intrude, nor the strife of man find a place; where human souls are in sympathy and no considerations of wealth and rank have place. Such is the mission of poetry—to help us to appreciate the high ideals of life—for which this society has been formed. We all wish it well. We feel it has a splendid future before it, a great work; and all who wish for the emancipation from the tyranny of materialism may wish it well.

## POETRY AS A CURE FOR SEA-SICKNESS.

We find an item of peculiar interest in Mr. A. C. Benson's article on Henry Sidgwick in the December *Cornhill*. "He had a wonderful verbal memory," says Mr. Benson, "and could quote copiously and accurately. He once told us that he had discovered a method of defying sea-sickness on a Channel crossing, which was to take his stand in some secluded part of the vessel, and to pour out audibly and rhetorically his repertory of English verse, accompanying it with a good deal of emphatic gesticulation. He said that he could go on repeating poetry continuously, if he did not force the pace, for about a couple of hours. I believe that the first experiment was successful, and that he secured immunity from nausea. But he said that the second time he tried it he was interrupted by one of the officers, with a message from the captain, begging him to desist, on the ground that some of the lady passengers were frightened by his behaviour, being under the impression that he was mentally deranged. He complied with the request, and, deprived of its intellectual prophylactic, his brain succumbed to physical sensations."

Mr. Benson also tells us that Professor Sidgwick's "voice was soft and high-pitched, and had at times a note of weariness about it. But he could modulate it very beautifully for emphasis or emotional effect; while his reciting of poetry was one of the most thrilling and enchanting things I ever heard. He began in a high chant, with a rich rhetorical cadence. May I confess that it seldom failed to bring tears to my eyes, perhaps not less because at the end of a quotation I have seen the water stand in his own! His stammer was well known, but he had so trained himself to disregard it that he never gave any sense of awkwardness or of delay to his hearers. He used to throw his head back to disengage an unruly consonant, and, strange to say, the impediment became a positive ornament to his talk, enabling him to bring out a point with a quaint and charming emphasis."

## LYRICS FOR MUSIC.

### A USEFUL SCHEME.

We have received the following interesting proposal from Mr. Alfred Perceval Graves, jun., the director of the Songwriters' Agency and Recitations Bureau, and the Council approves of its being brought to the notice of members:—

As the New Year is upon us, it occurs to me that you would like to have a review of the verse submitted to me for musical purposes from members of the Poetry Society.

Since February last I have received and dealt with very nearly two hundred lyrics in response to the notice which appeared in the February number of the *GAZETTE*. Of these, a large proportion is quite unsuitable for musical purposes.<sup>1</sup> And here I should like to draw attention to the manner in which these lyrics are submitted. In too many cases they are written, instead of being typed, upon sheets of paper of every conceivable size and quality. So as to avoid the unnecessary expenditure of time and trouble to which I am now put, I must request that in future my correspondents should send in their contributions clearly typewritten upon quarto paper and on one side of the sheet only. I have a further proposition to make to you, a proposition which should recommend itself to members of the Poetry Society.

Briefly, it is this: I contemplate the publication of the "Songwriters' Annual,"<sup>2</sup> which will be a sort of anthology of the best verse selected by me from among the lyrics submitted. This volume, well printed, in the form of a paper-covered volume, would contain one hundred lyrics. Of course, I could not go to the expense of having this done out of my own pocket. My suggestion is that each author included in the anthology should pay the sum of one guinea towards the cost of its publication and distribution.<sup>3</sup> Of the copies printed, I should send gratis copies to, say, 300 composers, with a request to each to mark and initial those examples which they might feel disposed to set to music. Upon the return of each copy duly initialled, the poem or poems selected would be marked and noted down in a register kept here for that particular purpose. This register would contain the date of despatch of the book, name Upon the return of each copy duly initialled, the poem or poems selected, name and address of the author, date of return of the book, length of reservation of poem required by composer, price composer offers for musical copyright in the words, or, in the case where the composer refers me to the music publisher as to such assignment the name, address, and terms offered by such publisher; lastly, there would be a column reserved for any alterations which the composer might suggest to the author in the text, for the purpose of adapting the lyric more readily for a musical setting.

The remaining copies might be equally distributed between the contributors to the volume, reserving 250 for sale and review. These copies might be published at 1s., and in the case where there is a demand for bound copies, a limited edition in cloth might be issued and sold for 2s. 6d. net.

From a composer's point of view, it is obvious that a neatly bound, well-produced volume containing as many as a hundred judicious selections would appeal much more readily than the sporadic receipt of single poems typed or printed. At the present day every popular composer is simply deluged with lyrics, mainly unsuitable, arriving by every post. Copies sent are not infrequently mislaid; in short, for these reasons the present system does not work as well as it should. Under my scheme the composer would have a wider range of selection from a compact mass of poetry, the author who paid his guinea would stand to earn from two to three guineas—occasionally slightly more—upon the assignment of the musical copyright in one single poem.<sup>4</sup>

Since I should like to collect my material, write a short preface, and have the book ready for publication at an

early date, I shall be much obliged if you would put this letter before your council at its meeting to-morrow.—  
Believe me, with kind regards, sincerely yours,

A. PERCEVAL GRAVES, JUN.,  
Director.

10 and 11, Charing Cross Chambers,  
Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C.  
November 29, 1910.

Mr. Graves subsequently gave the additional explanatory notes appended below:—

ADDENDA TO LETTER OF NOVEMBER 29, 1910.

(1) Only lyrics suitable for musical setting will be chosen, and in a critical and authoritative introduction it is proposed to offer some assistance to authors when writing for music.

(2) The annual publication would in great measure depend on the success of the first issue, which should not exceed 1,000 copies. This number would enable the book to secure some press notices, and thus materially assist public sales and the prestige of the volume.

(3) This charge of one guinea would, of course, be absolutely inclusive, and contingent only on acceptance. No charge whatever would be made for reading and selecting lyrics submitted. But it must be understood that the fact of sending in lyrics with a view to inclusion in this volume would constitute an acceptance of the conditions attached to the publication. The basis of the whole idea is essentially co-operative. The cost of the publication and of expert services, and the general expenses in connection therewith, have to be taken into consideration, and it is calculated that the inclusion of, say, 100 lyrics would cover these expenses to the extent of 1,000 copies.

(4) Only suitable lyrics that had passed through the ordeal of sifting would be chosen, and this fact makes inclusion more valuable than the author doing the work for himself. A point to remember in this connection is the fact that sometimes a composer will take advantage of the ignorance of the author in respect of the value of his verse, and consequently he is deprived of any just reward of merit. Again, the author and composer would be brought into much closer touch than is at present possible, and on even the acceptance of one lyric by a composer, a better guidance would be offered for future work. Hitherto very little attention has been paid by the author in the relation of his verse to music. The scheme recommends itself strongly from the remunerative point of view, including as it does a much wider publicity, the individual attention of all composers being brought to bear on authors' work, critical Press reviews, and the money to be earned from musical rights. Furthermore, it is likely to be more beneficial and effective than independent publication by the author, while the cost is reduced to the vanishing point. We would point out, too, that actual practical service is offered in this case, which is not an instance of charging an agency fee for problematical and inexpensive services.

(5) The privilege of inclusion in this volume, together with my services on these terms, will be confined to members of the Poetry Society.

MR. WILLIAM WATSON AND THE SOCIETY.—In a recent letter to the director, Mr. William Watson wrote: "I have read with much satisfaction and entire concurrence the remarks in the Society's magazine regarding the preponderance of the physical over the intellectual in the matters which now most engage public attention, and I trust the Poetry Society will exert a real influence in counteracting one of the most disastrous tendencies of our time."

"The seriousness of the Society's aims is a good sign, for poetry has not been taken seriously enough for some time past, and there is serious work for it to do in the future if it is to live and thrive."

## REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### BRIGHTON AND HOVE CENTRE.

Fortnightly meetings will be held on Wednesdays, at five p.m. The first meeting of the New Year will take place on January 4, at 21, Lansdowne Place, Hove, by the kind permission of Mr. W. H. Brailey. Subject for this meeting, "Ballads."

Mr. Brailey, Miss Hollis, and Miss Leech have consented to act as local councillors. The Centre President, Mr. Frankfort Moore, is most kindly giving the fortnightly meetings his active interest by personal attendance.

### EASTBOURNE.

The Eastbourne Centre held its last meeting of the autumn session on Tuesday, December 13, at the Public Library. Selections of Wordsworth's shorter poems were given by the members, the motif of the poem, in conjunction with the poet's personality, being subsequently discussed. A previous evening had been wholly devoted to the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality," when the President (Mr. Councillor Wright, F.R.S.L.) contributed an interesting biographical sketch of the poet, with special reference to the psychical side of his character. Shakespeare's "Coriolanus" has been read and studied with interest during the session, each member being allotted a part in the cast, and on reassembling in the New Year it is intended to perfect the reading of the play with the ultimate view of giving it in public. The President has been able to attend all the meetings, the ideas evolved have been to the mutual advantage of members, and a friendly spirit has pervaded all the discussions and criticisms.

### HAMPSTEAD.

This centre will resume meetings at 8 p.m. on first and third Tuesdays at Miss Huntsman's Studio, 150, Finchley Road, N.W., on January 3. The subject will be "Christmas and New Year Poems." On the 17th inst. "The Ancient Mariner" and other important poems will be read, and for February 7 members will please select "Poems on Youth or Age," in accordance with the desire of a member as expressed on page 4 of December issue of the *Gazette*.

Subscriptions for 1911 are now due, and members will oblige by forwarding same, together with their cards of membership, to the hon. treasurer, Mrs. Aynsley, 4, Elsworth Terrace, N.W., who will send as receipt the new card of membership.

### KENSINGTON.

Owing to the absence of many members from town, it has been decided to hold only one meeting during the month of January. This will take place at 28, Bina Gardens, South Kensington (by kind permission of Miss McGavin), on Saturday, January 28, at 5 p.m. Subject: "Patriotic Poems."

Notice is hereby given that all membership cards issued prior to November, 1909, are cancelled, and must be returned to headquarters or to the local secretary or treasurer during the month of January, together with subscription for the ensuing year, 5s., due January 1, when a new certificate of membership will be issued. Members are requested to facilitate this issue of new membership cards and the collection of the annual subscription by giving early attention to this notice.

By Order of the Council,

Clun House, Surrey Street, W.C., November 30, 1910.

The Council also issues the following instruction to Centre Secretaries: A levy of 1s. per member is made on and from the first of January, 1910, on all members attending Centre meetings as a contribution towards the expense of the monthly *Gazette*. This levy will be payable with the annual subscriptions. Members who have already volun-

December 31, 1910

## THE POETICAL GAZETTE.

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tarily contributed towards the journal fund are exempt from this compulsory levy.

Clun House, Surrey Street, W.C., November 30, 1910.

The "Loecine" audition will be conducted by Mr. H. B. Irving at the Queen's Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, W., on Tuesday, January 24. Members who have volunteered to take part in the production will be communicated with individually. They will be expected to read or speak a poem selected by themselves, and to speak the lines of any character they may choose from the first act of the play. Anyone who is prepared to join the cast may enter for the audition not later than January 10.

A series of Saturday afternoon recitals at the Passmore Edwards Settlement, Tavistock Place, W.C., will commence on January 21. Help in organising these recitals and securing an audience is urgently needed. Tickets, 1s. each, or a series of six for 5s.; a few reserved seats at 2s. 6d. each, or one guinea for ten.

On January 21 Lady Strachey will preside, and Hampstead members will contribute to the programme.

Mr. W. F. Rawnsley, a life-member of the society, who gave the address at the Tennyson Centenary celebrations in 1909, will lecture on "Tennyson." Please make these arrangements known. They are designed to extend the work of the society and to reach a wide circle of people.

The next meeting of the Clapham group will be held on January 11 at 18, Albion Road.

In aid of the funds of the society

## A DISTINCTIVE CHRISTMAS FETE

will be held at the Hotel Cecil on the Eve of Twelfth Day, January 5, 3-7 p.m. The programme will include the telling of fairy-tales, fairy dances and fairy pictures, and a Christmas tree.

Among those taking part will be Mrs. L. T. Meade, "E. Nesbit," Miss Lily Brayton, Miss Hilda Trevelyan, Miss Beatrice Ferrer, Miss Evelyn Sharp, Miss Dora Barton, Mrs. Lewis Hind, Miss Ruth Mackey, Miss Ruth Maitland, Miss Mabilia Daniels, Miss Maud Allan, Miss Evelyn Sharp, Miss Mabel Beadesley, Miss Dorothea Crompton, etc.

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Countess Eleanor Murphy, Hotel Curzon, Mayfair.

Baroness de Bertouch, 27, Scarsdale Villas, Kensington, W.

Baroness Rudolf de Bertouch, 27, Scarsdale Villas, Kensington, W.

Mrs. Garcia, 22, Inverness Terrace, W.

Mrs. Eyre Macklin, Lyceum Club, Piccadilly, W.

Mrs. Adrian Ross, 31, Addison Road, Kensington, W.

Mrs. Jopling Rowe, 7, Pembroke Gardens, Earl's Court.

Mrs. Swinhoe, 21, Prince Edward's Mansions, Pembroke Square, W.

Miss Marjorie Bowen, 55A, Maida Vale, W.

Miss Gade, 241A, Cromwell Road, S.W.

or The Director, The Poetry Society, Clun House, Surrey Street, W.C.

Full details on the souvenir programme designed by Mr. Walter Crane.

## AUSTRALIAN POETRY EVENING.

A dinner will be held at the Holborn Restaurant on Monday, January 23, SIR GEORGE REID, K.C.M.G., HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA, in the chair.

The feature of the evening will be the recital of a selection of representative Australian poetry, chosen by Mr. J. Henniker-Heaton, jun., in which Mr. Henry Ainley, Miss Carrie Haase and others, will take part.

Mr. Douglas Sladen will give an address on Australian poetry.

Among those who already have taken tickets are Sir John Taverner, Agent-General for Victoria; Mr. H. Pike Pease, M.P.; Sir Frank Marzials, Mr. Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, Major W. A. Adam, the Hon. J. McCall, Agent-General for Tasmania; the Hon. R. C. Russell, Mr. Harold Parker, the Queensland sculptor, etc.

Tickets, members, 6s.; non-members, 7s. 6d. (including dinner wine). Members are requested to bring this interesting event to the notice of their friends, particularly those with Australian interests. Early application for tickets should be made to the Director, the Poetry Society, Clun House, Surrey Street, W.C.

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\*. The publications of members of the Society and individual books of verse may be announced in this special column. For scale of charges apply, The Poetry Society, Clun House, Surrey Street, W.C.

## THE STUDY OF POETRY AND ELOCUTION.

The READING & TEACHING CENTRE, at the Literary Salon, 40, Sackville Street, W., under the auspices of the Poetry Society, is temporarily suspended pending rearrangement. All communications must be addressed to The Director, The Poetry Society, Clun House, Surrey Street, W.C.

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THE OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY, AS STATED IN THE CONSTITUTION, ARE

**To promote, in the words of Matthew Arnold, adopted as a motto, "a clearer, deeper sense of the best in poetry and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it."**

To bring together lovers of poetry with a view to extending and developing the intelligent interest in, and proper appreciation of, poetry.

To form local centres and reading circles and encourage the intelligent reading of verse with due regard to emphasis and rhythm and the poet's meaning, and to study and discuss the art and mission of poetry.

To promote and hold private and public recitals of poetry.

To form sub-societies for the reading and study of the works of individual poets.

To publish such poems by new writers as the Council may decide, and to offer premiums for poetry, and take such steps as may be deemed advisable from time to time to popularise interest in poetry and to assist in bringing about "a poetic renaissance."

To establish lectureships and publish a journal and celebrate and commemorate the birth and death-days of poets, and other literary anniversaries.

The ordinary membership subscription is 5s., with an entrance fee of 2s. 6d.; for schools and "institutional centres" a reduced rate applies.

Honorary members (persons eminent in literature or otherwise distinguished who sympathise with the Society but are not able to take an active part in its work) and vice-presidents (presidents of Centres and distinguished active members) pay a minimum membership subscription of one guinea per annum or a life membership fee of ten guineas.

The Society is intended to bind poetry-readers and lovers together throughout the English-speaking world, forming a desirable freemasonry, with poetry—the first and best of all arts—as the connecting link.

By means of local Centres, membership is made active and effective, members meeting together under a President and Council for the reading and study of Poetry and co-operating with Headquarters in the general work of the Society. A member of the Society is a member of the Centre most convenient for him to attend, and a member of any Centre is a member of the Society as a whole and may attend any Centre meetings anywhere on giving notice to the Secretary. This Centre system carries into effect the idea of a poetical freemasonry, a South African member visiting or going to reside in London or South Australia or wherever the Society has a branch being welcomed by and becoming a member of the local group.

Centres or individual members not formed into groups maintain regular communication with the Head Office, from which advice and direction may be obtained with respect to the formation, conduct and programme of Centre meetings, propaganda work, &c., and each Centre is expected to hold at least two public recitals per year with a view to interesting the general public and showing what an exquisite pleasure can be derived from the intelligent reading and speaking of verse.

The Society is the one body dealing with poetry as an ethical and cultural influence of the greatest importance, "redeeming from decay the visitations of the divinity in man," and seeks to bring mankind generally under its influence.

The Society also deals with elocution, and holds periodical examinations of recitals and "auditions" of readers with a view to securing the adoption of better methods and greater attention being given to the technique of reading and speaking. It has also under consideration a scheme for developing its work among schools and colleges.

